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Authority EO 12958  
By CH NARA Date 7-9-01

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

*Memorandum of Conversation*

DATE: February 17, 1969  
President's Office  
White House  
11:45 a.m. to  
12:45 p.m.

SUBJECT: Ambassador Dobrynin's Initial Call  
on the President

PARTICIPANTS: U.S. Side:

The President  
Mr. Henry A. Kissinger,  
Asst. to the President  
for National Security Aff.,  
Mr. Malcolm Toon, Acting  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for European Affairs

Soviet Side:

H.E. Anatoliy F. Dobrynin,  
Soviet Ambassador

Copies to:

The President greeted Ambassador Dobrynin in the Fish Room and escorted him into his office for a brief private chat. Ambassador Dobrynin told the President privately that, before his departure from Moscow last week, he had spent two days at a government dacha outside Moscow with Brezhnev, Kosygin and Podgorny and the message that he carried was based on his talks with the leadership. The President should understand, therefore, that what he had to say on substantive issues was an accurate reflection of the views of the leadership.

After Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Toon joined the President, the President gave the floor to Ambassador Dobrynin.

Dobrynin said that his government had noted with interest President Nixon's statement that his Administration looked forward to an era of negotiations, not confrontation. He could assure the President that the Soviet Government shared this view and was prepared to do its part to see to it that the period that lies ahead was

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truly one of negotiations and not confrontation. This was on the understanding, of course, that the issues to be negotiated and the subjects to be discussed would be by mutual agreement, that negotiations would not be pursued simply for their own sake but for the purpose of bringing about constructive results. Past experience indicated the importance of beginning negotiations as soon as possible. Delay could be harmful, and it was important therefore to recognize the desirability of moving ahead at an early date. The Ambassador had been instructed by his government to ascertain precisely what the President had in mind by negotiations -- specifically what issues the President felt should be the subject of negotiations and when, where, and at what level these should take place. So far as the Soviet Government was concerned, negotiations and an exchange of views on various subjects and at various levels could take place simultaneously. It was not excluded that at an appropriate time discussions could be carried on at the Summit level.

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the NPT.]

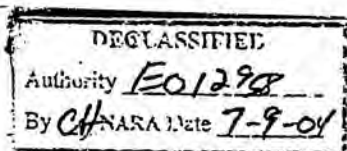
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[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the NPT.]

The President said that he wished to make clear that it was not his view that agreement on one issue must be conditioned by settlement of other issues. The President wished to express his conviction, however, that progress in one area is bound to have an influence on progress in all other areas. The current situation in Berlin is a case in point. If the Berlin situation should deteriorate, Senate approval of the Non-proliferation Treaty would be much more difficult. The President wished to make clear that he favored early ratification of the treaty and he is optimistic that the Senate will act favorably in the near future. We should

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bear in mind, however, that just as the situation in Czechoslovakia had influenced the outlook for the treaty last fall, so would the situation in Berlin now have an important bearing on the Senate's attitude. Ambassador Dobrynin had mentioned the desirability of making progress on some issues, even if settlement of other issues should not be feasible. The Non-proliferation Treaty is just such an issue. If we can move ahead on this it would be helpful in our efforts on other issues. The only cloud on the horizon is Berlin and the President hoped that the Soviets would make every effort to avoid trouble there.

Dobrynin said that the situation in Berlin did not stem from any action taken by the Soviets. The President would recall that a meeting was scheduled in Berlin last fall and the Secretary of State had discussed the problem with the Ambassador, urging him to persuade his government to avoid any action in connection with this meeting which might possibly result in unpleasantness in and around Berlin. The Ambassador said he would not wish his remarks to be recorded but he felt the President should know that his Government had used its influence to insure that the situation remained calm. There was no confrontation then, and Ambassador Dobrynin saw no need for a confrontation between us in the present situation.

The President hoped that there would be no trouble in Berlin and he welcomed Ambassador Dobrynin's assurances on this point. The Soviets should understand that we are solidly behind the integrity of West Berlin, and we will do whatever is necessary to protect it. He had noted in the press references to the "provocative nature" of his visit to Berlin. The President wished to assure Ambassador Dobrynin that these stories were totally without foundation and that his visit to Berlin was a perfectly normal action for any United States President to take in connection with a visit to Europe.

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The President concluded the discussion by pointing out to Dobrynin that the United States and the Soviet Union have all the power necessary to maintain peace in the world. If we play our role effectively, peace will be maintained. We do ourselves and others disservice, however, ~~if we pretend that we agree on all the basic issues.~~ We should rather insure that our differences do not lead to confrontation, that we are not drawn into confrontation by actions of others. We should recognize that diplomacy can play a vital role in insuring that this does not happen.